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Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting correspondence relative to an appropriation for the establishment of a military post for the protection of the settlements of Judith Basin and the Muscleshell, Montana Territory.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING

Correspondence relative to an appropriation for the establishment of a military post for the protection of the settlements of Judith Basin and the Muscleshell, Montana Territory.

APRIL 2, 1880.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, April 1, 1880.

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the United States Senate a letter from the Hon. Martin Maginnis, Delegate from Montana, dated March 21, 1880, urging the establishment of a new military post at a point on or near a line between Forts Custer and Assinaboine, or the latter place and Fort Keogh, for the protection of the Muscleshell Valley and the Judith Basin, where mines have been discovered and which localities are being rapidly settled up by stock-men.

General Terry, who commands the military department embracing this section of country, remarks: "I entirely concur in the views expressed by Mr. Maginnis," and General Sherman indorses the paper as follows:

Respectfully submitted to the honorable Secretary of War, urging the importance of some legislation which will permit the sale of posts overrun by settlement, and investing the proceeds of sale in new posts. The case of Fort Logan is a case in point.

Failing in this, I recommend that an appropriation be made of \$50,000 to build a new post to protect the settlements of Judith Basin and the Muscleshell.

Inviting special attention to the views of the General of the Army as expressed in his above-quoted indorsement, and fully concurring therein, it is respectfully recommended that an appropriation of \$50,000, for the purpose therein set forth, be made during the present session of Congress.

ALEX. RAMSEY,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT of the United States Senate.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D. C., March 21, 1880.

SIR: During the presence of General Terry in the city, I desire to call your attention to a matter in which the people of Eastern Montana

are greatly interested—more so, I think, at this time than in any other matter relating to their protection against roving bands of hostile Indians during the coming season.

The Muscleshell Valley and the Judith Basin are being rapidly settled up by stock-men, and, in addition, mines have been discovered in the Judith Basin.

This portion of Montana is not on any Indian reservation, and, as you are aware, is very attractive. Its settlement has been slow, because it is the run-way, as it were, of the different bands of Indians from the northern reservations to the Yellowstone River on one hand, and of the Crows as they go north on the other. It was formerly the scene of conflict when these tribes came in collision, and recently the theater of numerous encounters with the whites. During the past season all the small affairs, if the term may be used in distinction to the larger movements against the Northern Sioux, have occurred in this region, and unless some great war should break out, there will be probably more Indian murders and depredations along this advancing line of settlements during the coming summer than elsewhere in the Territory.

For many years the district and department commanders have recommended the establishment of a post in this region. Once Congress in specific terms appropriated \$100,000 for a post here; but the Custer affair occurring soon after, and the matter being left to the President, the proposed post was placed at the Big Horn. Then it was recommended to move Camp Logan out, but for want of means this was not done. Logan is now surrounded by settlements, and I would especially urge that it be moved out to the Muscleshell, to a point on or near a line between Custer and Assinaboine, or the latter and Keogh. This will be the line of protection for actual settlements.

The troops have to be marched and camped out there every summer. Camp Lewis covered the country one year, and the detachment of the Seventh at the mouth of the Muscleshell next year, and it would surely be less expensive to put up quarters for the troops where they are needed, than to have to move them back to Logan in the winter, and remove them from the scene of action at a time when, perhaps, they could be of most use.

A good deal of the material at Fort Logan might be utilized in building the new post, or the buildings, &c., at Logan, could be sold at good prices to the farmers and stock-men, and the proceeds applied to the erection of a new post.

You are so familiar with the country and have so often received the views of the department and district commanders about this matter, that I can only urge you to set on foot some movement to accomplish the desired result.

I inclose substance of several petitions received.

Very truly, yours,

MARTIN MAGINNIS.

General W. T. SHERMAN.

[First indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C., March 24, 1880.

Respectfully referred to General A. H. Terry, now in the city, for remarks.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.

[Second indorsement.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 25, 1880.*

Respectfully returned to the General of the Army.

I entirely concur in the views expressed by Mr. Maginnis.

ALFRED H. TERRY,
Brigadier General, Commanding Department of Dakota.

[Third indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C., March 26, 1880.

Respectfully submitted to the Hon. Secretary of War, urging the importance of some legislation which will permit the sale of posts overrun by settlements, and investing the proceeds of sale in new posts. The case of Fort Logan, Mont., is a case in point.

Failing in this, I recommend that an appropriation be made of \$50,000 to build a new post to protect the settlements of Judith Basin and the Muscleshell.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.